CARNIVAL
SCORE 1
04980
RANK 01
SCORE
0000
RANK
BONUS
300
PIPES
470
60
40
20
10

CARNIVAL REVUE

BY TONY LICATA

Carnival by Gremlin/Sega fully lives up to all the suggestions of its name. This game must rank as one of the few that could play profitably in either an ice cream parlor or a singles bar. It attracts across age groups from players barely big enough to reach the controls to the urban cowboys showing off for their ladies, to the trucker who has just jumped out of his 18 wheeler and wants to get his mind off the road.

Through the genius of some superb programming, *Carnival* offers the player all the excitement and thrills of a magical shooting gallery.

Across the top of the screen glide three rows of targets which consist entirely of brightly colored animal shapes, including owls, ducks, and rabbits. There are also some smaller targets which add bonuses to the score.

All the way at the top center rotates a pinwheel of pipe shapes. Beneath the wheel is a box that tells the player how many points the pipes count. The pipes become one of the first examples of the magic of this game because the number of points keeps changing, presenting the shooter with a challenge immediately. Beneath the rotating pipes are the three rows of targets moving alternately from right to left and left to right, just like the shooting galleries you remember from your youth at the carnivals and fairs that traveled around.

The player controls a pistol at the bottom with about 70 bullets to shoot, pictured in a row just above the lower border. He controls the gun with two mobility buttons for left and right, and fires it with a single Fire button, a lot of space theme games, although that's where the similarity begins and ends.

The second magical element in Carnival is that some of the duck targets spring to life when they reach the bottom row and come flying down toward the bullets.

The graphics here rank as excellent. The little duck silhouettes look real as they take wing and fly in a zig zag pattern. They manage to increase the excitement and pressure on the player because he *must* shoot them. If he doesn't the little buggers eat 10 bullets each time!

Play effects

From the time the player puts his coin in, the machine plays a superb calliope recording that conjures up a carnival atmosphere. It also offers a single stationary target at the right with a musical note shown. The player may shoot this any time he wants to stop the music from playing.

In the upper left hand corner a series of target changes takes place throughout play. They are above the three rows of moving targets and difficult to hit at the very beginning because so many obstacles are in the way. This element also adds to the action taking place before the player's eyes and guarantees repeat plays as he learns to deal with everything going on.

These targets include bonus points, minus bonus points, extra bullets, and minus bullets. In the case of the bonus points, the actual number appears, for example + 650, then it changes to + 550, then + 450, down to zero, across a time span of about 10 seconds. The fact that some of the bonus points that come up can reduce the player's score makes this element of the game even trickier.

Graphic displays of bullets in increments of about 10 also appear and if the player hits the target then, he gets that many extra bullets added to his ammunition. Like the bonus points there are minus bullets which cost the player shots if he happens to shot one.

Targets on the top line that are moving count for 60 points, second line 40 and bottom line 20. Scoring takes place on a digital readout in the top left hand section. Gremlin/Sega has incorporated a very nice touch here as it shows the player's rank below the score. Top players have their scores recorded in the game's memory with their initials.

One of the most charming touches on this super game takes place when/if the player clears all the targets. At that time a bear target comes out from the left and the player can get 50 points if he shoots it.

However this is not just any bear. It is a graphic rendering of the bear in that arcade game of 20 to 25 years ago. (Count 'em. If you are old enough to remember it, you probably don't want to admit it.) That game included a huge rifle that players aimed at a photoelectric cell in the center of the bear's stomach. In Chicago, players got 20 shots for a nickel. When you hit the bear, he stopped, stood up on two legs, growled, and turned around. One of the tricks to getting really good scores was to shoot the bear while he stood up to growl. At that point he stopped, so if you shot fast, you could keep him standing and nearly immobile and pile up a really high score.

Well Gremlin/Sega has recreated that bear and immortalized it on their carnival game. After the player shoots the bear and he stands up and growls, he turns around and scampers off the screen.

Last but not least, it is necessary to mention the sound on Carnival. Despite the fact that we are in the last half of 1980, getting deeper and deeper into the space age by the second, the game doesn't have a single electronic beep or whine or whistle!

All the sounds on *Carnival* simulate real sounds—and expertly. The gun sounds like a real pistol. When targets are hit they make a clang sound which must be a recording of a projectile hitting a metal target. And the ducks sound like ducks when they fly down the screen.

Overall, I rank *Carnival* 10 out of 10—a Bo Derek of a video game!

It must be called superb on playability, integration of graphics and sound, as well as originality and integrity of concept. What a brilliant application of modern solid state electronics to the timeless attraction of a carnival!

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Gremlin/SEGA

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